

## Challenge to the Secretariat

During the plenary, it was pointed out that "the lack of technical competence of Comsecs and of support staff may also be reasons the Senators have no confidence in them." This is quite a striking observation, or an admission to say the least. The root causes of which may be the lack of a well-defined hiring policies and the dearth of continuing education programs for Congress.

The challenge to the Secretariat is to prove to the Senators that it is worthy of its in the institution. One would just have to look back at the Secretariat in the 8<sup>th</sup> Congress and reclaim that extolled position.

A more serious challenge is to pursue the Action Plan included herein. The priorities agreed upon by the participants are:

1. Re-clarification/reformulation of Vision/Mission;
2. Systems review;
3. People or human capital investment;
4. Budget or modernization of equipment; and
5. Structure or re-engineering

Champions have also been identified through recommendations and actual volunteers. These champions will have to carry the ball and move the agenda of reform. No one would benefit from pursuing the Action Plan except the institution itself.

The timetable for the challenges identified is from three (3) to six (6) months for priorities 1, 2, 3 and 4. While priority 5 will take more than six (6) months to pursue and accomplish.

## Challenge to Management

Management is viewed as the extension of the Office of the Senate President. Whether that is good or bad is entirely outside the jurisdiction of this assessment. Two things stand out though in both the ODS and the workshops: management and pay scales are not the problems of the Senate Secretariat.

In any organization, the rank and file takes their cue from management. People are heartened to note that management takes their issues seriously and responds to it constructively. Agendas, programs, projects move because of management and the support of the rank and file. Thus, it is important that a regular and periodic dialogue be instituted among the management group and re-echoing of policies be done at the lower levels.

Constructive criticisms need to be processed to determine how better to respond to it. When criticisms are not processed and correctly handled, the informal channels of communication become more and more the venue to redress grievance and this weakens the institution altogether.

Reforms are hard to come by specially re-engineering a political institution like the Senate. But since the Secretariat is made up of supposedly career and professional individuals, and it is only them who will benefit from their own actions, management has to be viewed and seen as devoted to the institution so that their actions won't be colored by politics.

To signify direct commitment by management, it has to:

1. Shepherd the reform measures and seek consensus with party leaders from the Majority and the Minority for the passage of appropriate Senate resolutions;
2. Propose the creation of a continuing Study Group on Senate Operations composed of Members from both parties so that they can identify the kinds of services they want strengthened, issues addressed, etc.;

3. Pursue what can be done at their level to effect reform;
4. Call periodic meetings among the champions to prepare a detailed program of reform; and make sure that commitments are met in a timely fashion;
5. Submit to the Senate leadership re-engineering activities culled from the Reports of Champions.

The UNDP workshop is a big step towards re-engineering. The public dissemination of this assessment is a positive direction for management to find and build solutions together with the stakeholders. In fine, when a leader is devoted to the institution he/she serves, he/she gains the respect of everybody who dealt with him/her.